



St James – A shining light in Petts Wood



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

1st December 2024

First Sunday Of Advent



Fr David Says....

One of the best-known religious poems in English literature is "The Hound of Heaven" by the poet Francis Thompson who in his personal life had always tried to run away from God. In the poem, Thompson compares God to a hound, a hunting dog, chasing souls. The poem is lovely. In fact, it is the story of Thompson's own life. Thompson was a medical student for a few years. While in college, he somehow he got addicted to opium. His drug addiction destroyed him. He became a beggar, earning a living by shining shoes and selling matches. But Thompson was blessed to meet some good people on the road, and they helped him to become clean. In his poem, Thompson says that he was always trying to run away from God. He writes: "I fled him, down the nights and down the days; I fled him down the aches of the years; I fled him down the labyrinthine ways of my own mind; and in the midst of tears, I hid from Him and under running laughter". Thompson confessed that he had loved darkness instead of light. However God went after him and hunted him down. He had experienced God's mercy towards him and once we do so, then there is nothing we can do but be grateful. God is always like this. He is rich in mercy and full of compassion. We might be like Thompson, trying to run away from God believing to remain free from any kind of restrictions. God however is always after us, and He comes continuously into our lives in different ways to help us remember of his abundant love for us.

This year, Jeremiah, the prophet of hope introduces us to our Advent Season. Jeremiah was waiting and hoping for an ideal descendant of King David, the Messiah of God, who would bring security and justice to God's people. We Christians believe that Jeremiah's waiting and hoping were fulfilled in Jesus. Jeremiah assures us that the Lord, Our Justice, will fulfil His promises and hence, that we need not be afraid in spite of frightening events and almost universal moral degradation. "For you, I wait all day long" sings the Psalmist in today's Responsorial Psalm expressing the central theme of patient and prayerful waiting for the Lord and asking the Lord God to make known His ways to us and teach us. In the second reading Paul gives us instructions about how Christians should conduct themselves as they await for "the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His Holy ones". He urges us to put God's promise of peace into action by cultivating a spirit of love for others. We are told to strengthen our hearts in holiness and to abound in love for one another.

In today's Gospel we move from the year of Mark to the year of Luke. In fact today's Gospel is Luke's version of the Gospel we read two weeks ago from Mark. Luke seems to have been the first evangelist who believed that everyone in his community would die a natural death before Jesus triumphantly returned in the Parousia. The context of the gospel today is the fall of

Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple created a major crisis of faith for the early Christians. Since the expected end of the world did not come, many Christians gave up their belief in the second coming of Christ and abandoned their faith and began living lives of moral laxity. It may have been in order to address these needs that Luke continued with the second half of today's Gospel. Jesus exhortation to all of his disciples, then and now to be on their guard against "dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life".

Neither Paul nor the evangelists prepared their readers for Christmas. Instead they were helping these Christians to boost their spirits while they waited for Jesus to accomplish things in their lives that would give them a share in his risen life. Luke advised the readers on how they were to wait and prepare for the Lord in their present situation of indefinitely waiting for Christ's second coming. They had to shift their attention and energies from future fulfilment to present service and commitment. They must prepare themselves by watchfulness and prayerfulness. That is why, after reminding his community about the signs which would precede Jesus's second coming, Luke gives them Jesus's warning "Be on guard lest your spirits become bloated with indulgence and drunkenness and worldly cares. Pray constantly for the strength to escape whatever is in prospect and to stand secure before the Son of Man"

Since our transformation is an ongoing process, we move yearly through the liturgical celebration of the mystery of our salvation. While Advent is set aside to commemorate Jesus's coming in the flesh as well as Jesus final coming in glory, it is also a time for us to open ourselves to the Lord's coming into our lives and our world today. In order to do this, we must read the signs of the times and adjust our lives accordingly. Jesus also gives us the assurance that no matter what terrors the future hold, Jesus will be present, caring for us. Jesus calls us to watchfulness, as we Hope in Jesus's second coming. Not only an active Hope gives us joy it also keeps our prayer life alive and ready to resist temptation.

Luke reminds us to trust in Jesus amid the tragedies that sometimes occur in our daily lives. Our marriage may break up, we may lose our job, discover that we are ill or become estranged from our parents or children. In all such situations, when we feel overwhelmed by disaster and feel that our lives have no meaning, Jesus says – Stand up, raise your heads up high, because our salvation is near. Two significant Advent values are Hope and Humility. Hope enables us to desire and expect the birth of Christ in us as we humbly and trustingly await God's liberation and peace.

Thank you once again for taking time to read my reflection for this weekend. May God bless you on this Advent Journey. Maranatha – Come Lord Jesus.



All the Masses being said at St James' will be live streamed
<https://www.churchservices.tv/pettswood>
For the protection of all attend St James we request that you do not video live Masses using your phone during services.
 You can also take part in Adoration and Benediction by live stream.
 All events for live streaming are listed on the streaming site.

Office Phone Number: 01689 827100
 Office Email Address: pettswood@rcaos.org.uk
davidcamilleri@rcaos.org.uk

Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,
 or by appointment.

First Sunday Of Advent Saturday 30th November Sunday 1st December	6:00pm Bianca Gieje RIP (A Mulroy) 09:15am James Dordoy RIP (L Henderson) 11:00am Philomena Cott RIP (L O'Sullivan)
Feria Monday 2nd December	10:00am Laura Haines - Wellbeing (L Henderson)
Saint Francis Xavier Tuesday 3rd December	10:00am Patrick Denvir RIP (Foundation Mass)
Feria Wednesday 4th December	10:00am Alex, Claire & Jude Macleod - Wellbeing (L Henderson) 10:45am Eucharistic Adoration
Feria Thursday 5th December	10:00am Richard Condon (May Field)
Feria Friday 6th December	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham 5pm to 7pm Eucharistic Adoration
Second Sunday Of Advent Saturday 7th December Sunday 8th December	06:00pm James Mulroy RIP (A Mulroy) 09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Cecil Cardoza RIP (I & I Webb)

This weeks second collection will be for the JPIC Overseas Project
 Next weeks second collection will be for the Parish Building Fund



The current needs for this week are for:

- Biscuits
- Sweets and chocolates
- Razors
- Tinned Soup
- Bleach
- Christmas Puddings & cake
- Tinned Ham
- Mince pies
- Peanuts/crisps

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>